

Christianity and Crisis

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The Gospel of the Resurrection

THERE was no doubt about the defeat; the disturbing Prophet from Galilee had been successfully put out of the way. Prophet, preacher, rabbi, wonder-worker—whatever he might be called—he was at least a disturber of the peace, a threat to the established order. This business of crucifying him which the Roman Governor had kindly undertaken, was highly approved by every really important citizen. One more menace to the social order was out of the way.

Whenever and wherever those good citizens gather now to talk over the affairs of the world they left some 1900 years ago, it is perhaps a bit humiliating to them to realize how badly they guessed. The crucified prophet, so they have heard, has become the most powerful spiritual and moral force in that old world. He does not rule it yet. Many dispute his power, many who acknowledge it betray his cause from day to day, or are lukewarm about it. But in spite of that, in spite of many retreats, many setbacks, many defeats, always he (the disturber) comes back into the scene with power; and little by little he wins the hearts of men. That is the fact; and while the spirits of those good citizens may be humbled by their bad guess, they are surely very happy about the outcome. In that other world the perspective is better.

Now the reason they guessed so badly lies in the Easter story. Whatever else entered in to shape events and send out those early disciples to win the world, the primary factor was the certainty that the defeat on Calvary was not a real defeat. It was a victory. The Master lived. Death had "no more dominion over him." All that had come to them in their life with him continued, grew richer, became more and more compelling. The power of the great personality which had mastered them, penetrated now to their inmost souls as never before. They had followed him gladly through the villages and fields of Palestine; but now gladness was transformed into exaltation. He lived. He lived for them as he had died for them. He did more than that. He lived in them. In the Spirit he took possession of them.

There are many puzzling questions about the life

and thought of those early disciples. But there is no question about this great and profound experience. Their conviction that the kingdom would be restored to Israel, that in some deep sense which they could not quite understand, Jesus was King, had been shattered in the mockery of the crown of thorns and the death on the cross. But now they were sure of it again. The primitive imagery of the hope of his coming clothed a deep essential experience. They knew through the living Jesus that God rules, that in God's universe suffering is redemptive and God's purpose is never defeated.

History may or may not repeat itself. The answer to that question does not really matter very much, for the crude stuff of which history is made does repeat itself constantly. Human nature and human experiences are still the same as in Palestine so many years ago. People had and people have their ups and downs, their ambitions and disappointments, their satisfactions and failures, their defeats and victories. The drama lived out on so small a theatre in Palestine, is repeated over and over again in the centuries which follow. Souls touched with love of God, souls eager to see God's will done among men, are plunged into despair. The forces of darkness and of evil conquer. God is defeated. But that is never the end. Somehow, somewhere, the eyes of the spirit are opened. The Christ lives. "He is risen," comes the cry. Courage, exaltation, certainty return. God is not defeated.

Defeat seems close to us today. Men of the Western World half a century ago were living in the glowing faith that they had found the way of life. Peace, prosperity, and an ever-growing wealth and ease would be theirs. The hand of God was upon them in blessing. That dream world was swept ruthlessly away in 1914 when the judgment of God fell upon the nations and the weakness and rottenness of the structure of society was revealed—a competitive world, the battle to the strong, the ethics of the jungle guiding the nations as they struggled for power and wealth. That dream world was swept away; but it seemed for a time that a real new world was being born. Prophetic souls

looking to the heavens and humble souls thinking only of the bare securities of life began to believe that the kingdom would be restored to Israel. There was the League of Nations; there was the great Russian experiment; there was a growth of healthy social democracy. The century of the common man was at hand.

Again came the crash. Again the judgment of God fell upon men. Again the world fell to pieces. Cold war turned to hot, and yet again through all its horrors it seemed that the kingdom would be restored. Men discovered that they lived in one world. They set to work to organize it. They poured out wealth to relieve suffering. They pledged themselves to restore devastated countrysides and ruined cities. They would control atomic energy—destroy the destroyer.

And now where are they? Mankind hangs with the Lord of Life upon the cross. Over all the world strife, cruelty and ruthless struggle for power are the setting for the cry of the desperate, the hopeless and the hungry. The visions of the prophet and the hopes of the poor are fading. Our one world seems utterly divided. The United Nations seems to many but a bright dream. Atomic energy may promise vast contributions to civilization, but what is the use of bothering about that when the stockpile of atomic bombs increases day by day? In our own bright land racial tension grows; creedal antagonism grows; juvenile delinquency grows. Education is adrift. Religion seems futile. If we have not the despair of the displaced person, the haunting fear of the secret police and the moaning cry of the hungry little ones, we have everywhere frustration, disorder and chaos of mind and soul.

It is to this disappointed, troubled and suffering world that the Gospel of the Resurrection comes. "He is Risen." "Death hath no more dominion over him." The death on the cross is the victory of love. God's purpose is never defeated. He in whom it is incarnated lives. Righteousness, justice, love are eternal. Courage is the word.

It is a very great message. It does not mean that the commonwealth of love is to be ours in this generation or the next. On through the years the Christian soul will have no call to let "his sword sleep in his hand." But it does mean that Christ is eternal and that the purpose of God is never defeated.

E. L. P.

Editorial Notes

The Supreme Court decision denying the school board of Champaign, Illinois, the right to conduct

released time religious instruction on the ground that it embarrasses individual students who do not want to participate, would seem to lead to an even more consistent secularization of our education. We are publishing the dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Reed in another part of this journal. It expresses apprehensions about the wisdom of the decision which many of us share.

Mr. Justice Frankfurter's concurring opinion deserves special mention, not only because its thoughtful and scholarly approach to the whole history of state-church relations in education reveal with what thoroughness and diligence the Court considered the problem, but also because it emphasizes two points which seem to us highly dubious. The first questionable point is the use of the phrase "the wall of separation" between church and state, as if it were in the Constitution. The Constitution prohibits the monopoly of one religion in the state and the suppression of others. By inference it also prohibits special privileges for any faith. To insist that "separation means separation and not something less" is, as Mr. Justice Reed observes, to give a metaphor the status of a constitutional principle. The insistence upon "absolute separation" becomes the more confusing when the court suggests that there may be schemes of "released time" religious instruction which do not violate the Constitution, presumably because they are in the category of cooperation between church and state, sufficiently qualified to fit into the definition of "absolute separation."

The other point worth mentioning is that the majority felt that "children belonging to non-participating sects will thus have inculcated in them a feeling of separatism when the school should be a training ground of the habits of community." Here is the central issue. Can we have community only by emptying our culture of all of its differences or by pretending that actual differences do not exist? Does community not require that we come to terms with each other despite our differences? Does not the Court's emphasis accentuate the very weakness of our American culture; its emptiness?

A true harmony of life must, in the words of Santayana, "not destroy the vitality of the parts." We are in danger of trying to preserve our unity at the expense of the vitality of our culture. Into this spiritual vacuum "seven devils more evil than the first" can easily rush. Nor must it be forgotten that modern secular surrogates for historic religious faiths have a free course in our public schools. Being only implicitly and not explicitly religious they do not have to worry about the "wall of separation."

R. N.

The Christian Faith and College Education

DAVID E. ROBERTS

THE question as to where post-war college education is going is reaching a crucial stage; and how that question is finally answered has a direct bearing upon the future of Protestantism in this country. Religious work on our college campuses determines almost entirely the quality of our ministerial candidates from one generation to the next. It also determines in large measure the quality of the church's lay leadership—sometimes in the negative sense that the college years are the point at which the church loses forever many of those who might have served it most ably. Therefore the church as a whole has a tremendous stake in the fate of higher education; and yet those who are most acutely aware of this fact tend to spend much of their time trotting around together from one committee meeting to another, while the rank-and-file of the church's membership remains comparatively apathetic.

The problem we confront today is posed by the fact that the church, in principle, lost higher education to secularism a long time ago. In other words, the college problem is only one aspect of a pervasive situation in which the church has lost out to secularism all up and down the line. It is true that the prevailing attitudes on our campuses are materialistic, brittle, competitive and pseudo-sophisticated. It is true that alcohol and sex are serious, sometimes devastating, problems. A typical fraternity house will spend more in one week-end on liquor than its members will give in a year for the relief of needy students in Europe.

In recent decades religious forces have followed two opposite types of strategy in college work, neither of which is adequate.

The first might be called building up dikes to keep out the flood. Roman Catholicism has followed it by maintaining its own parochial schools and colleges; and a few Protestant groups are now coming to the conclusion, apparently, that they must try something similar. A less extreme variant of the same method involves trying to make the denominational affiliation of the so-called "Christian college" mean something once again. Accordingly, the boards which support such colleges financially put pressure upon them to hire professors who are active church members, and in other ways to deepen the religious tone of the campus. One can sympathize with the earnest motivation which lies behind such a policy without being sanguine concerning the value and permanence of its results.

One other dike-building technique can be found in certain segments of the Student Movement, which proceed on the assumption that Christian faith can

flourish only among a small group of "separatists." These "committed" students build walls against scepticism and worldliness, and join together as a tiny band in a common discipline of prayer and righteous living.

Now whatever one may say for or against the dike-building method in detail, it clearly suffers from one major defect. At best it can capture only small pieces of territory for Christianity, while leaving the great main stream of our educational enterprise relatively unaffected. Parochial schools never have been, and never can be, an integral part of that enterprise so long as our educational system remains free and democratic. And Protestant efforts to revitalize the idea of a Christian college will defeat their own purpose if they drive such colleges into little back-eddies, shut off from the great intellectual and social forces of the secular world.

The second method, at the opposite extreme, might be described as tearing down the dikes. It simply capitulates to secularism. It reflects the widespread assumption that humanitarian activities furnish modern man with a wholly adequate substitute for religion.

For years influential portions of the Student Movement seemed to be traveling in this direction. Some of its leaders were hostile toward the church because of the latter's predominant conservatism on social and doctrinal questions. They observed how the ordinary local parson, when invited to speak in chapel, failed to establish contact with the undergraduate mentality. They observed how some of their own students, coming from Fundamentalist backgrounds, were well-nigh persecuted by their parents and pastors for "losing their faith" in college, whereas actually the fault lay with the church for having filled their minds with beliefs which could not possibly stand up under the scrutiny of modern knowledge. In recent years, of course, a great change has occurred, and the Student Movement is very much concerned about both the Ecumenical Church and the recovery of Christian doctrine. But this change has taken place mainly at the top level of leadership, and it has not yet reached down very far into undergraduate attitudes across the country.

The policy of tearing down the dikes has also been operative in the teaching of religion. Let me illustrate by means of an extreme example. Picture a college where Bible courses have been taught by an innocuous retired minister whose services could be obtained at cut-rate because he needed only a few hundred dollars to supplement his pension. These courses were especially popular with dim-witted fullbacks because no student who could manage to

recite in a pious voice was ever known to receive lower than a "B". At last the elderly minister is replaced, and onto the campus charges the young new professor of religion. He not only has a Ph.D. He is almost hysterically eager to prove that his courses are intellectually respectable. He not only knows a lot about Higher Criticism. He has studied the non-Christian religions from an anthropological point of view; he has studied prayer from a psychological point of view; he has studied the church from a sociological point of view. At the drop of a hat he can talk about quantum physics, Marxism or birth-control. None of these accomplishments should be deprecated. The only trouble is that there is one thing he *cannot* do. He cannot teach Christianity as something to be believed because it is true.

I am unhappy about both of the strategies we have been surveying because the problem will be solved only when Christians take the initiative in formulating basic educational philosophy, instead of allowing it to take a secular foundation for granted and then finding themselves in the predicament of having to decide whether Christian forces should resist or conform. And we have reached a point where Christian initiative of this sort is not only possible, but imperative. Despite the enormous amount of literature that has flowed from the presses about higher education—or perhaps because of it—the situation is one of amorphous confusion. And it will remain one of confusion until educators face up to the fact that science, politics, the humanities and ethics cannot possibly be integrated except on a religious basis. But this confusion cannot continue indefinitely because the students will not stand for it. They are angry about the state of affairs which sent them to war; they are frightened about the future even though they don't think much about it because thinking about it seems to be so futile. They are deeply dissatisfied with the ideas which their professors formulated a generation ago and have kept repeating ever since for lack of anything better to say. Therefore they are quite accessible to a presentation of the Christian message so long as it is couched in language which avoids what they regard as "bunk." They are impressed by the fact that religious and educational forces are the sole means at our disposal for making a radical break with those malignant patterns which are destroying civilization. But the opportunity to capture the student mind of this generation for Christianity must be seized in a fashion that will embrace our whole system of higher education.

At this point the question always arises as to how a Christian foundation can be established without contravening the liberal principles on which American education should rest—especially in view of the fact that the rights of other religious groups, and of anti-religious groups, must be safeguarded. My answer is that Protestantism need ask for nothing

better than a full implementation of liberal principles. But notice what this implies. The principle of free and open debate is *not* being followed when atheistic or naturalistic dogmas can be smuggled into any class-room under the guise of scientific objectivity, while no courses on the Bible or religion are permitted in the curriculum. A really "liberal" policy would provide a fair hearing for as many major points of view as possible. Admittedly there are practical difficulties when the faculty has to be small. But many of our largest universities have philosophy departments whose members all belong more or less to one "school"; and in some instances it would take a major miracle to establish a ratio of even *one* tentative theist to *five* ardent naturalists in such departments. Protestantism should favor having the debate made *really* free, and fair, and open, not only because it would require Christian apologists who could hold their own with scientists, historians, sociologists and philosophers, but because the latter might be smoked out of the sheer ignorance and prejudice which often characterize their unexamined and unchallenged attitudes toward Christianity.

A closely related principle of liberal education involves the assumption that each participant shares with the others a desire to reach the truth by means of critical inquiry. It must be recognized frankly that some Roman Catholic, Marxist, and other rigidly dogmatic approaches put this principle in jeopardy. But what has Protestantism to fear from a demand for critical inquiry which disqualifies these monopolistic claims to possession of the truth?

Finally, Christian faith has a unique contribution to make at the point where our whole conception of liberal education most needs to be widened and strengthened. The colleges have assumed that social wisdom and personal stability would follow directly from cerebral enlightenment. And the assumption has been disastrously wrong. Because of emotional factors which have remained almost untouched, college education makes pathetically little dent upon racial prejudices, class conformities and personal maladjustments which may nullify almost everything that the student has learned from books.

Here Christianity can fill a vacuum in our conception of what it means to educate the *whole man* because it can reach the heart and the will, as well as the head. Many of our educators today talk nervously about the need for "an integrative philosophy of life" which will synthesize science, the humanities, personal morals and social action; then they hurry back to their desks to fiddle with the curriculum or to revise their list of great books. But at some deep level they know, and their students know, that what is really lacking is a dynamic faith. The great question they present to us, as churchmen, is whether we can make available those resources in the Gospel which can answer their need.

The Minister and Industrial Peace

(The following article was written by a southern labor leader, who is an active churchman. The writer attempts to portray the social philosophy of the average Protestant minister facing the problems of industrial conflict. The main character is, of course, fictitious, but the anonymous author hopes that the article will provoke realistic discussion).

THE Reverend J. Benjamin Locke was giving the benediction at the monthly meeting of the ministerial union: "Take away, dear Lord, the sin and violence caused by the strike now disturbing our town. May the peace of Christ come soon."

He started homeward—back to the world of sermons, visitations, and, for the moment, strikes. Locke was troubled in heart. For on the previous night a strikers' meeting had been held on the front lawn of a sympathetic townsman of Millville. All local meeting halls, including Locke's own church auditorium, had been refused the strikers. A few hours following the gathering, the townsman's garage had been dynamited.

As Locke unfastened the fence gate of his home, he saw a tall, gray-headed man standing on the porch. "Pardon me, preacher," the stranger began, "I know I seem to be intruding. Just wanted a word with you."

"Certainly. Let's sit down here," Locke replied, and soon the two men were seated on the porch.

The stranger continued, "You'd be surprised to learn, I know, that I'm a labor organizer, and —" Locke moved uneasily as he perused his neighbors' porches to see who was looking. The union man was saying, "I know you would be interested to know how some of us working people in Millville feel about that dynamiting last night."

A strained silence followed before Locke was able to screw up his courage, and leaning forward declared, "Sir, before you labor organizers came to town, our workers were happy and contented. This dynamiting would never have happened if the workers hadn't been so aroused. If labor unions bring only strife and violence, I don't see why workers want any unions at all . . ."

Unknowingly perhaps, Locke had set forth his own social creed: that turmoil in industrial relations are the signs of society's evil and approaching disintegration, and conversely that industrial peace is the *sine qua non* of progress toward a more Christian social order. Yet Locke was no pacifist, neither was he one who doubted the importance of a police force, capital punishment and an adequate army and navy. His priority for industrial peace stemmed from his theological acceptance of Paul's counsel that "the powers that be are ordained by God," and from his belief that sweet reasonableness plus a little Christianity could settle any dispute between capital and labor.

In fact, Locke had declared to his fellow ministers

that very day, "If all men would only accept Christ, then all our labor troubles would be quickly solved." His colleagues had been quick to agree that the minister's duty was to save souls, not society. Thus Locke was analyzing all of history as well as the present labor crisis, in personalistic and individualistic categories without regard for the social forces of history. Furthermore, he was forgetting the simple historical truth, attested by the Bible, *that fundamental changes for the better in society are often accompanied by divisions, disorder and sometimes bloodshed*. Just as an individual before conversion is often in a state of intense anxiety and confusion, so society before the rise of some underprivileged class or group is often gripped by social upheavals.

But Locke was unaware of these facts. To him peace had reigned in Millville before the advent of the labor organizers. Great billboards assured the workers that they were members of the "Millville Happy Family", and boasted of "Millville's reliable, native white labor which maintains uninterrupted production." The millhands reported to work regularly. They seldom grumbled about their grievances, in public at least. The weekends, enlivened by alcoholic spirits, were often disorderly, but all was forgotten on Monday morning if the contented workers returned to the mill sober. Yet unbeknownst to Locke perhaps, there lurked beneath the workers' surface smiles and pledges of loyalty to "the company" fears of discharge and unemployment. Each man knew that some idle word, some simple deed, might mean the end of his bread and butter and a vain search for work under the shadow of the employers' black lists.

But with the coming of the hated labor organizers, the peace of seeming contentment gave way to rivalries and turmoil. The strike began when some workers, protesting against the employer's refusal to recognize the union, "sat down" on their jobs. Then they formed picket lines both to arouse public opinion and forcibly to keep "scabs" from entering the mill. The pickets were fed by their women folks, who were often successful in soliciting financial support from sympathizers. At the same time, the employer hired "goon squads," employed strike breakers, gave bonuses to the "loyal" workers, evicted striking mill families from their company-owned homes, and formed a local Citizens Committee for Law and Order.

Locke knew the crisis was deepening when he saw further signs of social disintegration. Families were divided, with fathers against striking sons, and striking fathers against "company-minded" sons. Neighbors quarreled, and men would not speak to each other on the street. At school one child called

another a "damned scab," and the immediate retort was, "Your old man is a d... Red." The end was not yet. Locke became alarmed when church attendance dwindled. He was moved to preach a temperance sermon when he read in the paper that some drunken striker had beaten up a "scab." Soon he began to believe that all the strikers were reds and irresponsible drunks.

Believing that the pillars of the established order were about to fall, Locke went further. He proclaimed from the pulpit that violence had taken the place of law, drunkenness the place of sobriety, striking-fund rocking-chair money the place of an honest day's labor, strikers' meetings and employers' conference the place of church attendance and prayer meetings. The world had gone mad! Locke began to realize that he was caught between the mounting resentments of the striking workers, and the fanatical fears of employers who were seeing their power challenged for the first time. What was Locke to do? There was only one way: he must appeal for the immediate ending of the strike so that industrial peace would come once again to Millville. Unfortunately, Locke's pleas were futile. The workers were a little wary of the industrial peace before the strike—the peace of servility, the peace of "Yes, sir" and "The boss is always right."

The striking workers finally won their battle. Their union was recognized and a contract signed. In Millville a new power equilibrium was established between capital and labor. Organized labor began to take an accepted place in the community. It had representatives on the Red Cross, on the school boards, and even entered local politics. In the meantime, Locke had changed. Now a steady reader of *The Federationist* (AFL) and the *CIO News*, he pronounced the invocation at a political rally of the union, and despite the opposition of his board, he taught labor education classes and voted for a labor-endorsed candidate. But it was hard for the labor leaders to forget that Locke had "passed by on the other side" in the hour of the workers' need, and that consequently the workers had to win the strike with their economic strength, without benefit of clergy. Was Locke friendly to labor just because industrial peace had returned to Millville, just because fathers and sons no longer fought on labor questions, because neighbors were neighbors once again, because school children had forgotten the words "scab" and "Red"? Did Locke now "accept" labor, because the community generally accepted it? And what would happen if labor unions, in the days ahead, were temporarily smashed? Would Locke tell his parishioners and fellow clergymen that practically all Protestant denominations have endorsed labor's right to organize and to bargain collectively? In brief, is the Reverend J. Benjamin Locke a prophet of justice, or merely a faithful echo of popular opinion? * * * * *

It is my belief that if American Democracy is to survive and grow, clergymen, as well as other professional persons, must make their peace with rising labor, racial and minority groups *after* they have obtained a greater power and acceptance in our society. Locke made his peace with the labor unions of Millville after they had obtained new power. He was not foolish enough to believe that labor could do no wrong. He was simply a sympathetic critic of labor. Yet Locke seemed to lack the necessary vision and courage which would enable him to support some underprivileged group such as a labor union or a racial minority *before* the members made their bid for power or *during* their actual struggle for power and justice.

Locke's temerity was not caused by social pressure from his wealthy parishioners. It arose because he could not face the historical fact that social change, even in a democracy, is often accompanied by disorder, conflicts and sometimes bloodshed. He was so horrified by the workers' lack of manners, so unaware of the pent-up resentments in the workers' hearts, so personalistic and moralistic in his analysis of social conflict, that he did not have the necessary perspective to determine the principle of justice and equality in the struggle between capital and labor.

Only the Christian faith can give a man this perspective when he faces both the grandeur and the destructiveness of industrial conflict. For a Christian's faith and a Christian's determination to struggle so that all men may have both bread and liberty, must not be based on the assurance of victory or on the promise of any worldly Utopia. For there is no peace, for either the heart or the world, which the world can give. As long as there are selfish men, and as long as there are Christians and non-Christians who are willing to struggle for a greater and more lasting justice in this world, there will always be turbulence, divisions and violence. "I have not come to bring peace, but the sword," (Matthew 10:34) were Jesus' words. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," (Ephesians 6:12) was Paul's prophetic analysis of the Christian's struggle for justice in this life.

Hence any man who bears the name of the Lord must face the inevitability of social conflict, the tenuousness of any type of industrial peace and the imperfections of any form of social justice. But upon these facts must shine the light of faith—the faith that God himself is in the struggle for justice and peace. He holds history within his hands, and He desires that none shall be lost. He will be with his ambassadors who face the problems of society realistically, who condemn inequity wherever it may appear and who side with the needy, the forgotten and the despaired.

The World Church: News and Notes

Mr. Justice Reed's Dissent in the Religious Instruction Decision of the Supreme Court

Because of our conviction that the recent Supreme Court Decision on the question of religious instruction in schools is a very fateful one and that it must inevitably lead to an even more consistent secularization of our education, we print herewith the dissent of Mr. Justice Reed. This dissenting opinion accurately expresses many of the convictions and apprehensions about the decision of the majority held by people in the church. The account of the dissenting opinion is taken from the Associated Press dispatch. A partial text follows:

I find it difficult to extract from the opinions any conclusion as to what it is in the Champaign plan that is unconstitutional. Is it the use of school buildings for religious instruction; the release of pupils by the schools for religious instruction during school hours; the so-called assistance by teachers in handing out the request cards to pupils, in keeping lists of them for release and records of their attendance; or the action of the principals in arranging an opportunity for the classes and the appearance of the council's instructors? Neither of the reversing opinions say whether the purpose of the Champaign plan for religious instruction during school hours is unconstitutional or whether it is some ingredient used in or omitted from the formula that makes the plan unconstitutional.

It seems obvious that the action of the school board in permitting religious education in certain grades of the schools by all faiths did not prohibit the free exercise of religion. Even assuming that certain children who did not elect to take instruction are embarrassed to remain outside of the classes, one can hardly speak of that embarrassment as a prohibition against the free exercise of religion. The religious teachers and their teachings in every real sense, were financed and regulated by the Council of Religious Education, not the school board.

State's Interest in Religion

The phrase "an establishment of religion" may have been intended by Congress to be aimed only at a State Church. When the first amendment was pending in Congress in substantially its present form, "Mr. Madison said, he apprehended the meaning of the words to be, that Congress should not establish a religion, and enforce the legal observation of it by law, nor compel men to worship God in any manner contrary to their conscience." Passing years, however, have brought about acceptance of a broader meaning, although never until today, I believe, has this Court widened its interpretation to any such degree as holding that recognition of the interest of our nation in religion, through the granting, to qualified representatives of the principal faiths, of opportunity to present religion as an optional, extracurricular subject during released time in public school buildings, was equivalent to an establishment of religion. I agree that none of our

governmental entities can "set up a church." I agree that they cannot "aid" all or any religions or prefer one "over another." But "aid" must be understood as a purposeful assistance directly to the church itself or to some religious group or organization doing religious work of such a character that it may fairly be said to be performing ecclesiastical functions. I agree that pupils cannot "be released in part from their legal duty" of school attendance upon condition that they attend religious classes. But as Illinois has held that it is within the discretion of the school board to permit absence from school for religious instruction no legal duty of school attendance is violated.

Aid From Government

It seems clear to me that the "aid" referred to by the Court in the Everson case could not have been those incidental advantages that religious bodies, with other groups similarly situated, obtain as a by-product of organized society. This explains the well-known fact that all churches receive "aid" from government in the form of freedom from taxation. The Everson decision itself justified the transportation of children to church schools by New Jersey for safety reasons.

Well-recognized and long-established practice support the validity of the Illinois statute here in question. That statute, as construed in this case, is comparable to those in many states. All differ to some extent. New York may be taken as a fair example.

In some, instruction is given outside of the school buildings; in others, within these buildings. Metropolitan centers like New York usually would have available quarters convenient to schools. Unless smaller cities and rural communities use the school building at times that do not interfere with recitations, they may be compelled to give up religious education. I understand that pupils not taking religious education usually are given other work of a secular nature within the schools. Since all these states use the facilities of the schools to aid the religious education to some extent, their desire to permit religious education to school children is thwarted by this Court's judgment.

The practices of the Federal Government offer many examples of this kind of "aid" by the state to religion. The Congress of the United States has a chaplain for each house who daily invokes divine blessings and guidance for the proceedings. The armed forces have commissioned chaplains from early days. Under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, eligible veterans may receive training at government expense for the ministry in denominational schools.

Relation of Church and State

The prohibition of enactments respecting the establishment of religion do not bar every friendly gesture between church and state. It is not an absolute prohibition against every conceivable situation where the two may work together any more than the other provisions of the first amendment—free speech, free

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press—are absolutes. If abuses occur such as the use of the instruction hour for sectarian purposes, I have no doubt that Illinois will promptly correct them. If they are of a kind that tend to the establishment of a church or interfere with the free exercise of religion, this Court is open for a review of any erroneous decision. This Court cannot be too cautious in upsetting practices embedded in our society by many years of experience. A state is entitled to have great leeway in its legislation when dealing with the important social problems of its population. A definite violation of legislative limits must be established. The Constitution should not be stretched to forbid national customs in the way courts act to reach arrangements to avoid federal taxation. Devotion to the great principle of religious liberty should not lead us into a rigid interpretation of the constitutional guarantee that conflicts with accepted habits of our people.

From Mr. Justice Jackson's Opinion

Though Mr. Justice Jackson supported the majority decision, the following words from his opinion are also relevant:

It would not seem practical to teach either practice or appreciation of the arts if we are to forbid ex-

posure of youth to any religious influences. Music without sacred music, architecture minus the cathedral, or painting without the scriptural themes would be eccentric and incomplete, even from a secular point of view. Yet the inspirational appeal of religion in these guises is often stronger than in forthright sermon. Even such a "science" as biology raises the issue between evolution and creation as an explanation of our presence on this planet. Certainly a course in English literature that omitted the Bible and other powerful uses of our mother tongue for religious ends would be pretty barren. And I should suppose it is a proper, if not an indispensable, part of preparation for a worldly life to know the roles that religion and religions have played in the tragic story of mankind. The fact is that, for good or for ill, nearly everything in our culture worth transmitting, everything which gives meaning to life, is saturated with religious influences, derived from paganism, Judaism, Christianity—both Catholic and Protestant—and other faiths accepted by a large part of the world's peoples. One can hardly respect a system of education that would leave the student wholly ignorant of the currents of religious thought that move the world society for a part in which he is being prepared.

But how one can teach, with satisfaction or even with justice to all faiths, such subjects as the story of the Reformation, the Inquisition, or even the New England effort to found "a Church without a Bishop and a State without a King," is more than I know. It is too much to expect that mortals will teach subjects about which their contemporaries have passionate controversies with the detachment they may summon to teaching about remote subjects such as Confucius or Mohamet. When instruction turns to proselytizing and imparting knowledge becomes evangelism, it is, except in the crudest cases, a subtle inquiry.

To lay down a sweeping constitutional doctrine as demanded by complainant and apparently approved by the Court, applicable alike to all school boards of the nation, "to immediately adopt and enforce rules and regulations prohibiting all instruction in and teaching of religious education in all public schools," is to decree a uniform, rigid and, if we are consistent, an unchanging standard for countless school boards representing and serving highly localized groups which not only differ from each other but which themselves from time to time change attitudes. It seems to me that to do so is to allow zeal for our own ideas of what is good in public instruction to induce us to accept the role of a super board of education for every school district in the nation.

It is idle to pretend that this task is one for which we can find in the Constitution one word to help us as judges to decide where the secular ends and the sectarian begins in education. Nor can we find guidance in any other legal source. It is a matter on which we can find no law but our own prepossessions.

Author in This Issue

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